

1 March 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: [REDACTED]

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SUBJECT : Comments on Draft Project Papers
for the US-USSR Environmental
Agreement

1. The Geography Division of OBGI has a strong interest in all aspects of environmental agreements with the Soviets and we want to continue to receive as much information on all the exchanges as possible. Specific comments on several of the draft project papers are as follows:

A. Paper No. 3 -- Water Pollution. Much overlap exists between this working group and that of Dr. Butcher and his Water Resources Working Group which is a part of the Cooperative Agreement in the Fields of Science and Technology. We hope that these two groups will coordinate their activities.

The choice of Lake Baikal for the visit of the expert group to the USSR is in some respects a poor one. Although it has received much publicity, Baikal is one of the less polluted large lakes in the USSR. Opportunity to observe research conducted on the Volga River would be very valuable. We also think inclusion of the Aral and Caspian Seas, and marginal seas such as the Baltic Sea, would be beneficial, rather than restricting the program to rivers and estuaries. On balance, the proposal would appear to offer the USSR more opportunities for gain than the US. We agree with many of the comments in Annex A, Mr. Pisano's criticisms of the program.

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§5B (1), (2), (3), or (4) (single one or more)
Automatically declassified on
Date Impossible to Determine

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B. Paper No. 5 -- Urban Environment. On page 8 of the draft paper it is noted that the Soviets may not accept the areas dealing with permafrost construction technology and waste management. If these two areas are not part of the agreement, the US would have little opportunity to gain from the program.

C. Paper No. 6 -- Wildlife Conservation. This section of the proposal would be of mutual benefit to both countries. It also could be an opportunity to have US personnel visit some areas of the Soviet Arctic which are off the beaten track.

D. Paper No. 9 -- Marine Organisms. The Soviets do an appreciable amount of marine research related to environmental pollution, but tend to publish in a rather restrictive, technical form. Since we have little knowledge of Soviet analytical abilities in this field, this may enlighten us and hence be a productive exchange. This Office has an interest in how the Soviets will treat these topics at the several international forums -- UN Environmental Secretariat, Law of the Sea Conference, Marine Pollution Conference, and the UN Water Conference -- and these exchanges may well give us some insights on their views and positions.

Reference item II. B. 3. a. We believe that Baku is a must for a visit by US personnel because of the marine pollution research conducted in Baku and environs. Also, the scientists could visit the off-shore oil drilling facilities in the Caspian Sea at Neftyanyye Kamni and the research ship Bakuvi which is engaged in marine biological research for the Azerbaydzhan Academy of Sciences.

Reference item III. A. 1. Available information, if fully exploited, would probably be sufficient to accomplish the objectives of the preliminary visit.

Reference item III. B. 2. a. The International Activities Staff of the National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Commerce already does much of what is proposed in this section.

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Reference item III. C. 1. The objective of seeking to establish standardized water quality controls is important and should be more clearly stated here.

E. Paper No. 14 -- Legal and Administrative. At this point there seems to be little that the US could learn from the Soviets in the way of an environmental policy framework in government or mechanisms and strategies for pollution control and enforcement. They have a history which abounds with environmental legislation, but with few results. The exchange would, however, help us evaluate the efficacy of the environmental protection measures they are taking now.

2. Any questions about these comments, or any additional information on the exchanges should be directed to [REDACTED] x2706.

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